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ABSTRACT

A graduate internship program in applied anthropology at the University of South Florida (Tampa) is described. The program was designed to train graduates for responsible positions in human service settings at local, state, national, and international levels. Students specialize in one of three applied tracks: public archaeology, urban anthropology, or medical anthropology. In addition to course requirements including statistics and research methods, students must spend one quarter as interns in a community agency actively involved in problem solving. The internship is intended to provide experience in practicing applied anthropology and to permit specialization in a social problem area. Mental health centers are among the organizations which sponsor interns. The internship evolves after a series of meetings between the students, his/her major professor, and representatives from the potential sponsoring agency. A contract is prepared which outlines the intern's role as a researcher at the agency. In some cases interns carry out research upon the agency; in other cases they perform research with agency staff on outside organizations. Problems of the program are few and usually result from unavailability of agency staff for supervision or consultation to the intern. Four factors have been identified as important to successful research in social agency settings: toleration of frustration, involvement of agency managers in research planning, minimization of demands on agency staff for data, and clear communication with all agency personnel at all times. (AV)

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Student Interns in Applied Settings: Successful Adaptation to a New Econiche

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The master's program in the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida in Tampa is in its fifth year of operation. It is specifically designed to offer training to prepare its graduates to assume responsible positions in human service settings at local, state, national and international levels. Students specialize in one of three applied tracks, public archaeology, urban anthropology or medical anthropology.

The curriculum of the program stresses both substantive and experiential learning. Students in all tracks must satisfy the same set of basic requirements. These include successful completion of four core seminars related to the basic subfields of traditional anthropology. However, each of the core seminars has an applied slant to it. Other requirements are comprehensive exams in three of the four core areas, two electives-preferably outside of anthropology, a statistics course and three track courses including methods, regional problems and selected topics. Finally, a student completes a one quarter internship and a thesis based on some aspect of that internship. Various aspects of the program have been discussed by Kushner and Angrosino (1974) and Angrosino and Kushner (1978).

A distinctive component of the program is the internship in which students spend one quarter working full time with an off-campus organization actively involved in problem-solving. The internship is designed to complement classroom learning, provide actual experience in practicing applied anthropology, permit further specialization in a social problem area, encourage professionalization of non-academic anthropology and enhance the marketability of the professional anthropologist. Undergraduate majors in our BA Applied Focus Component also perform an internship.

The internship is where the student confronts the non-traditional field situation; however it is often not the first exposure to it. Many of our students begin working "for the man" in non-traditional field settings during the course

of their graduate careers. As well, in regional problems courses, they may work as a group-in some capacity - with a local agency in an endeavor such as evaluating a program of alcohol abuse services. Because of my experience as leader of the track in Applied Medical Anthropology, the rest of my remarks will relate to medical track interns in non-traditional field settings. I have personally supervised many of the students in their internships.

The intern in Medical Anthropology normally spends one quarter working full-time in a local agency or organization on some project or in some capacity related to applied medical anthropology. The internship experience should be valuable, positive and significant, both in terms of the needs of the agency and the student. The internship should serve as a sort of in-service training for the student who plans to enter the field as a professional upon completion of the M.A. degree.

Normally the internship experience evolves after a series of meetings between the student's major professor, the student and representatives (managers) from the potential internship agency. At the conclusion of these conversations and before the student begins his or her internship experience, the parties mutually agree to the nature of the involvement of the student with the agency, i.e., the particular project the student will be working on and the particular role the student will occupy within the agency. All of this is summarized in a formal contract.

The agency supervisor or manager responsible for on-the-job day-to-day supervision of the intern's work, is made aware of the breadth of skills that the applied medical anthropology intern brings to the job, such that he or she may utilize the intern's anthropological expertise in ways which will maximally assist the agency, organization project or program in fulfilling its role.

During the course of the internship, the student consults regularly with their agency and academic supervisors regarding any problems encountered during the performance of intern duties. Some internships are sponsored by an NIMH training grant.[1]

Medical Anthropology interns have been placed in a wide variety of Tampa Bay area agencies including the County Medical Examiner's office, a Community Mental Health Center, a Mental Health Institute, a Mental Health Planning Board, the County Children's Study Commission, a Health Systems Agency, a Health Planning Council, a VA hospital, the District Health and Rehavilitative Services office, a nursing home, a women's crisis center, the Division of Children's Health and a women's resource center.

Not all of these internships have involved carrying out research in non-traditional settings. However, several have involved research on the intern-sponsoring organization, i.e., an evaluation of Emergency Mental Health Services in a community mental health center or an evaluation of a program of aid to elderly crime victims. Still others have been oriented toward research in a non-traditional field setting sponsored by the intern's agency, i.e., an evaluation by a mental health institute of foster care services in the community. Most all of our internships have been highly successful, for several reasons; there have been few difficulties.

Many of the very basic causes of successful research in non-traditional settings hold true for that done in traditional settings as well. Most important is an adequate preparatory background in terms of skills. Our students have had two electives, normally outside of anthropology, a statistics course (this year Quantitative methods in Applied Anthropology) and a methodology course in their track specialty, i.e., applied medical anthropology. Electives reflect a student's specialized interests. Internship settings are chosen specifically with a student's training, interests and career goals in mind.

Second, research in a non-traditional setting is usually not alien to the intern. Most of our students have worked in an institutional situation either as part of an experiential learning project in the Regional Problems Medical track course, or they are employed by agencies part-time prior to their internship.

Many, if not most of us, had field experience of some sort before performing our first major peice of traditional fieldwork - our dissertation research.

Like those whose major career commitments and interests theoretically and realistically lie in the area of traditional field research, our students, through a process of self-selection, have made a realistic and theoretical commitment to non-traditional, human service/agency oriented anthropology. This commitment is often so strong that after completing an internship, a student takes gainful employment at the expense of immediately satisfying the last traditional academic requirement, a thesis.

Laying the foundation for agency-based research is at the same time similar to and different from preparation for traditional fieldwork. The similarity is that good field research of any sort occurs only after the researcher has spent considerable time, prior to the actual work, learning everything possible about the field settings and characteristics of the people who will be studied. This may even involve pre-research contact with key informants (agency supervisors or managers) and other "natives."

The difference is that our students meet formally with agency personnel and with their major professor and together all parties reach contractual agreement on the nature of the student-researcher's involvement in the non-traditional setting. Agreement is reached regarding research design, data to be gathered by whom and in what ways, etc. In traditional research such formality and pre-research mutual cooperation and attention to critical detail is rarely affected between the student or researcher and the research "subjects."

A major and significant difference between traditional and non-traditional research, at least as typified by what USF interns have worked on, is that many local agencies actually call us - indeed they sometimes clamor to secure our interns to do research with or on them and their programs. They want to or recognize the need to be studied. I seriously doubt that Boas was summoned by the

Kwakiutl or that the Trobriand Islanders sought the scrutiny of Malinowski.

Few problems have arisen and those have been primarily related to individuals rather than predictably dicey situations. Upon infrequent occasion agency managers have been relatively unavailable for consultation or supervision to the researcher. This situation is one I feel that anthropologists have had to contend with in traditional settings; the innocent selection of key informants or acquaintances in the population under study may, as we all realize, stifle if no prevent successful completion of our field research. Without close and continuing interaction between researchers and institutional managers, even the best devised research plans can often go awry in organizational settings.

Indeed when key institutional managers are kept abreast of research progress and consulted with respect to emergent problems and mutations in research design, a major step is taken toward assuring the success of fieldwork in non-traditional settings.

It is not unusual for time pressures to be felt by investigators because managers are eager to use preliminary research results as programming tools. When such strategies are incorporated into research methodology, the possibility of institutional astonishment at the nature and content of the final research report is minimized.

To the best of my knowledge our student researchers in institutional settings have not encountered problems related to accountability or surveillance. The only significant problem related to content of a final research/evaluation report was a result of inaccessibility of the institutional director to the researcher for ongoing consultation regarding the nature of the research.

Another problem that we have encountered, although infrequently, results directly from research in non/traditional-social action settings. Our internships hopefully match students with agencies involved in problem areas of interest to

the particular intern. It can happen that an intern/researcher will, because of personal convictions, become so involved with the agency's programs that their research objectives are really never accomplished; those objectives are lost among the polemics of social action programs. If the research is ultimately finished, there is a probability that findings, results, conclusions and recommendations will be biased by the researcher's commitment to agency goals or certain polemical stances. Anthropologists enter traditional field settings to learn to objectively observe, record, analyze and interpret. To deviate from this methodology in non-traditional field settings is to remove anthropologists from the realm of science, and make their research results of dubious value to others.

The lessons that have accumulated to me as a result of my experience with the academic management of student intern-researchers in institutional settings and in my own experiences with research of non-traditional settings were built upon an extremely naive base. I am by training a very traditional physical anthropologist. Given this, I have found that the best coping and indeed planning tools related to anthropologists grapling with methodological problems encountered in non-traditional research settings are utilized by those who probably have the most experience in areas that we are relatively innocent of, I speak of evaluation researchers.

In recent years they have begun to directly address themselves to the problems they have encountered since the rise of their craft in the early 1060's. I have found the commentary of Weiss (1972), Moursund (1973) and Struening and Guttentag (1975) among others particularly cogent and helpful. All contain valuable information on theoretical, methodological, ethical and practical-logistical considerations.

Many if not most of the formal working methodologies of data collection in traditional anthropology and evaluation research are similar, as are analytical

techniques and reporting of research results.

The major differences stem from the structure and function of institutions which we refer to as non-traditional research settings or field situations. Weiss (1972:104) refers to this as "the turbulent setting of the action program."

Four basic factors are critical to the success of evaluation research and, I feel, anthropology research in non-traditional settings. One, that only experience can bring, is the ability to tolerate frustration, for frustration is inherent to institutionally situated research, whether evaluative or otherwise. Murphy must have done some insitutionally based research prior to formulating his law.

Second is to, if at all possible, involve institutional personnel (managers) in research planning, all aspects of it, and to maintain their involvement if possible throughout the project. At the outset, they can provide perspectives alien to the anthropologist, as can key informants in traditional field research. The possibilities of research-in-progress-conflicts are minimized if managers are thoroughly familiar with who is doing what, how is it being done and why. At the outset, questions related to accountability, surveillance, data control, etc. should be discussed and agreed upon. Clear lines of authority must be established; researcher, institutional personnel and managerial roles must be clearly understood.

Third, in research design, minimize demands on agency staff and resources. A records clerk usually has enough to do without collecting data or accessing files for you. Interviews and questionnaires should be as terse as possible; precision has its logistical bounds, especially in modern institutional settings.

Fourth, when communicating with institutional persons, do so openly, in their terms, on their level. And communicate judiciously. Any agency or organization is open to ciriticism and can be fairly criticized. Somewhere within the

workings of all institutions is room for legitimate criticism, including the American Anthropological Association, your friendly neighborhood Anthropology department and maybe even institutionally focused research teams.

These "lessons" have become part of good evaluation research methodology. They ought to comprise a strong tool for successful anthropological research in non-traditional field settings. Indeed, evaluation research is a distinct part of our methods curriculum. Attention to it, in addition to the other factors I have outlined here, serves to insure, I feel, that our graduates are not innocents at home.

[1]The Applied Anthropology Internship Project is directed by Professor Alvin W. Wolfe. It is specifically designed to train anthropology graduate students to work in mental health organizations and agencies.

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